

Message Text

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54

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 OTPE-00 OC-05 CCO-00 NEAE-00 /035 W

----- 029735

P R 161215Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY DOHA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1349

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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DEPT FOR AID/SER/CFS AND NEA/ARP

AID ALSO FOR W. KENDRICK, A/AID

E.O. 11652: N/A (DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT)

TAGS: ECOM, ETRD, EAID, QA

SUBJ: GOQ MINISTER OF FINANCE REQUESTS PROPOSAL FROM US

COMMUNICATIONS FIRM

REF: DOHA 0246 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: GOQ MINISTER OF FINANCE AND PETROLEUM HAS ASKED FOR VISIT TO QATAR BY HIGH LEVEL OFFICIAL OF US COMMUNICATIONS FIRM. VISIT WOULD BE FIRST STEP TOWARD NEGOTIATION OF CONTRACT WITH US COMPANY TO MANAGE, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN ALL OF QATAR'S COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT(TELEPHONE, TELEGRAPH AND EARTH STATION). CONTRACT PRESENTLY HELD BY UK FIRM CABLE AND WIRELESS. SUBJECT WAS RAISED IN GENERAL TERMS DURING BERGER TEAM VISIT AND WE HAVE NOW BEEN SPECIFICALLY ASKED TO LOCATE SENIOR PRIVATE SECTOR COMMUNICATIONS OFFICIAL. INITIAL MEETINGS WOULD BE AT TOP LEVEL OF GOQ - WITH MINISTER OF FINANCE AND PETROLEUM AND POSSIBLY WITH AMIR HIMSELF. END SUMMARY.

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2. EMBOFF MET MARCH 16 WITH OFFICE DIRECTOR OF SHAYKH ABDUL AZIZ BIN KHALIFA AL THANI, MINISTER OF FINANCE AND PETROLEUM (ALSO SON OF AMIR). EMBOFF NOTED THAT DURING MEETING WITH BERGER TEAM, MINISTER HAD EXPRESSED INTEREST IN US ASSISTANCE IN FIELD OF COMMUNICATIONS, AND THAT WE HAVE ALSO BEEN TOLD BY GOQ DIRECTOR OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS THAT GOVERNMENT WISHES TO REPLACE CABLE AND WIRELESS (C AND W) WITH US FIRM. OFFICE DIRECTOR CONFIRMED THIS, STATING THAT GOQ DISPLEASED WITH BOTH C AND W TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE AND FAIRLURE OF COMPANY TO TRAIN QATARIS OR OTHER ARABS TO TAKE OVER POSITIONS HELD BY BRITISH STAFF.

3. OFFICE DIRECTOR SAID THAT MINISTER WISHED TO MEET WITH SENIOR OFFICIAL FROM LEADING AMERICAN COMMUNICATIONS FIRM AS FIRST STEP TOWARD REPLACING C AND W. C AND W HAS BEEN IN QATAR ALMOST 30 YEARS AND HAS MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR CONTRACT FOR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF TELEPHONE SYSTEM, BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL, TELEGRAPHIC FACILITIES AND NEW EARTH SATELLITE STATION. REPLACEMENT CONTRACT WOULD INVOLVE THESE RESPONSIBILITIES PLUS TRAINING PROGRAM EITHER IN US OR QATAR TO GRADUALLY "ARABIZE" OR "QATARIZE" THE COMMUNICATIONS SECTOR. ACCORDING OFFICE DIRECTOR, MINISTER WANTS TO MEET REP FROM SINGLE FIRM AND LEAVES IT TO US TO SELECT COMPANY, AS LONG AS IT IS FIRST RATE FIRM WITH WIDE EXPERIENCE IN FIELD.

4. OFFICE DIRECTOR PRESSED FOR COMMITMTMENT AS TO WHEN VISIT COULD BE EXPECTED, STATING THAT MINISTER WOULD LIKE TO GET BALL ROLLING WITHIN ONE WEEK. WE SAID THAT WHILE IT NOT POSSIBLE TO GET SOMEONE OUT HERE IN THAT PERIOD OF TIME, WE WOULD CERTAINLY REQUEST EXPEDITIOUS HANDLING OF MINISTER'S REQUEST. OFFICE DIRECTOR NOTED THAT AMIR HIMSELF VERY INTERESTED IN REPLACING C AND W, AND SAID IT POSSIBLE HE WILL ALSO WISH TO MEET WITH COMPANY OFFICIAL. OFFICE DIRECTOR CAUTIONED THAT REPLACEMENT OF BRITISH AS FIRMLY ENTRENCHED HERE AS C AND W WILL BE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ISSUE AND ASKED FOR THE UTMOST DISCRETION ON OUR PART IN HANDLING REQUEST.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: REQUEST DEPT AND AID MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO LOCATE MAJOR US FIRM INTERESTED IN THIS OPPORTUNITY THAT CAN SEND REP TO DOHA SOONEST. WHILE IT NOT NECESSARY TO PRODUCE COMPANY PRESI LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DENT,
REP SHOULD BE HIGH RANKING OFFICIAL GIVEN LEVEL OF
MEETINGS PLANNED HERE. PLEASE ADVISE ASAP. IT ESSENTIAL THAT
OPPORTUNIY NOT BE GIVEN WIDESPREAD PUBLICITY AND FIRMS CONTACTED
SHOULD BE TOLD THAT LACK OF DISCRETION COULD SCUTTLE CHANCES
FOR US COMPANIES.

6. FOR AMEMBASSY MUSCAT: WE RECALL THAT US FIRM REPLACED

C AND W IN OMAN DURING PAST YEAR. THIS OUTFIT COULD BE EXCELLENT
CANDIDATE FOR JOB HERE, BUT NAME ESCAPES US. WOULD APPRECIATE
IF YOU COULD ADVISE DEPT AND US NAME OF COMPANY AND ALSO IF
OFFICIAL IS AVAILABLE IN MUSCAT WHO COULD VISIT DOHA ON
SHORT NOTICE.
YOUNG

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TELECOMMUNICATION, MEETING PROCEEDINGS, ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT, CONTRACTS, BUSINESS FIRMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 MAR 1976
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DOHA00289
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760098-0841
From: DOHA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760358/aaaabyiu.tel
Line Count: 121
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 DOHA 246
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 JUN 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <04 OCT 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOQ MINISTER OF FINANCE REQUESTS PROPOSAL FROM US COMMUNICATIONS FIRM
TAGS: ETEL, ETRD, EAID, QA, US
To: STATE MUSCAT
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006